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C O N F I D E N T I A L HAVANA 000768

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR WHA/CCA AND CA/OCS
DEPT PASS TO NSC

E.O. 12958: DECL: 12/24/2019
TAGS: CASC, PREL, PGOV, CU
SUBJECT: GOC GRANTS ACCESS TO ALAN PHILIP GROSS

Classified By: COM Jonathan Farrar for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

1. (C) SUMMARY: The Cuban Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MINREX) called in COM and CG on December 24 to inform the U.S. Interests Section (USINT) that access to arrested Amcit Philip Alan Gross had been granted for Monday, December 28. The Government of Cuba's (GOC) response to other outstanding consular access issues, including initial consular access to two arrested Cuban-Americans is still pending. END SUMMARY.

2. (C) On the morning of December 24, Chief of Mission Jonathan Farrar and Consul General Martha Melzow were invited to MINREX for a meeting to discuss consular access. MINREX officials present in the meeting were Director of the North America Office Josefina Vidal Ferreiro, Deputy Director of the North America Office Johana Tablada de la Torre, and Counselor Eduardo Martinez Borbonet. Vidal opened by mentioning that she was aware of USINT's request for consular TDY assistance from the U.S mission in Mexico. She said that the new CG in Mexico City, Sean Murphy, had contacted the Cuban Embassy there in this regard. The CG informed her that one request was being processed through the Cuban Interest Section (CUBINT) in Washington and the other through Mexico City.

3. (U) Vidal provided a positive MINREX response to the three USINT dipnotes requesting access for Consul General Martha Melzow and a consular assistant to visit arrested American Citizen Alan Phillip Gross. The consular visit will take place on Monday, December 28, 2009 at 10:30 A.M. at Villa Marista. Vidal confirmed that Gross had spoken to his wife for the second time the evening of Wednesday, December 23.

4. (C) When queried concerning USINT's request for a meeting on the repatriation process for incarcerated Cuban-Americans, Vidal informed the COM that MINREX was consulting with the legal department of the Ministry of the Interior (MININT) as well as the consular affairs section in MINREX to determine who would attend.

5. (C) The CG informed Vidal that USINT was still awaiting a response to requests for initial consular access to arrested American citizens Lazara Estrella de Armas (currently detained in Prision Occidental de Mujeres, Manto Negro) and Xiomara Pena (currently detained at 100 y Aldabo in Havana). Vidal responded that both requests had been forwarded to MININT and more precise details would be forthcoming.

FARRAR

=====CABLE ENDS=====